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ABSTRACT

As desegregation alternatives to busing are explored in the Dallas school district, educational equity remains a priority. Components and goals of the Dallas educational equity plan are presented in this address. The two most consistent challenges are recruiting minority staff and getting white students to attend schools in predominantly minority areas. A major feature of the school district plan is a controlled choice policy, of which special K-6 learning centers are a part. The ways in which the Pearl C. Anderson learning center (Dallas, Texas) recruited students and created special programs are discussed. The learning center's success is attributed to shared organizational purpose, an emphasis on positive individual experience, enhancement of student achievement in traditional and nontraditional subjects, and parent education and participation. Conclusions are that the gap between minority and white achievement opportunities has narrowed, but has not closed, and that educational equity is both crucial and attainable. (LMI)

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"EQUITY AND CHOICE:

ISSUES AND ANSWERS IN THE DALLAS SCHOOLS"

BANQUET ADDRESS

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

7 P.M., MONDAY, MARCH 5, 1990

WORTHINGTON HOTEL, FORT WORTH

MARVIN E. EDWARDS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marvin E. Edwards

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AS YOU CAN TELL FROM THAT INTRODUCTION, I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND ITS ISSUES FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND IN MORE THAN ONE SITUATION, I HAVE HAD TO "PROVE MYSELF" AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN IN THE JOB.

HOWEVER, TALKING TO YOU THIS EVENING MAY BE THE GREATEST CHALLENGE I'VE EVER FACED...!

...IN FACT, IF I HAD KNOWN WHEN I FIRST ACCEPTED DENNIS DUNKINS' REQUEST TO BE ON THE PROGRAM THAT I WOULD BE FOLLOWING SUCH OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS AS HAVE

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ALREADY ADDRESSED YOU, I'M NOT SURE I'D HAVE ACCEPTED!

AFTER ALL, WHAT COULD I SAY THAT HADN'T <u>ALREADY</u> BEEN SAID <u>BETTER</u>?

...THEN, WHEN I FOUND THAT I WOULD BE SPEAKING NOT ONLY AFTER SO MANY EXPERTS BUT ALSO AFTER YOU HAD SPENT <u>THREE DAYS STRAIGHT</u> EMBROILED IN SPEECHES, TOURS, BREAK-OUT SESSIONS, MEETINGS AND "CULTURAL EVENTS," I <u>REALLY</u> BEGAN TO WORRY!

WHAT COULD BE <u>LEFT</u> TO SAY -- AND <u>WHO</u> WOULD BE LEFT TO HEAR IT?

...THEN, I LEARNED THAT NOT ONLY WOULD I FOLLOW SO MANY EXPERTS, AND THREE DAYS OF SESSIONS -- BUT THAT I WOULD FOLLOW <u>BOTH</u> THE PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION <u>AND</u> A BIG BANQUET MEAL!

WELL, THAT'S WHEN I STOPPED WORRYING!

I REALIZED THE CHANCES WERE GOOD THAT, AFTER THE RECEPTION AND DINNER,...

- SOME OF YOU WOULDN'T CARE WHAT I HAD TO SAY!
- ONLY SOME OF YOU WOULD HEAR WHAT I HAD TO SAY!
- AND EVEN FEWER OF YOU WOULD REMEMBER WHAT I HAD TO SAY!

AND OF COURSE I REMEMBERED THAT THE SUBJECT OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION CAN NOT BE DISCUSSED TOO MUCH.

...WE CANNOT TALK TOO MUCH ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNGSTERS.

...WE CANNOT SHARE TOO MUCH ABOUT OUR EXPERIENCES AND OUR SUCCESSES IN CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN WHITES AND MINORITIES, ADVANTAGED AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.

...AND WE CANNOT EXPLORE TOO OFTEN THE WAYS AND MEANS OF MEETING THIS CHALLENGE AND OF ENSURING EQUAL EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.

THIS EVENING, I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF OUR EXPERIENCES IN DALLAS, TEXAS -- THE EIGHTH LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE COUNTRY, WITH A STUDENT POPULATION THAT IS NOW EIGHTY-TWO PERCENT MINORITY.

NEARLY FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF OUR STUDENTS ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN, AND OVER THIRTY PERCENT ARE HISPANIC.

AS WAS THE CASE WITH MANY URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS, DALLAS' PERCENTAGE OF MINORITY STUDENTS INCREASED GREATLY FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COURT-ORDERED BUSING IN THE 1970s. AND, WHEN THE DISD BEGAN BUSING MINORITY STUDENTS FROM MINORITY NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS TO MINORITY SCHOOLS ACROSS TOWN, THE SCHOOLS AND THE COURTS AGREED THAT AN

ALTERNATIVE TO "MIXING" STUDENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EQUALIZING EDUCATION MUST BE FOUND.

NOW, I WAS NOT IN DALLAS AT THAT TIME. I WAS HAVING MY OWN EXPERIENCES WITH DESEGREGATION UP NORTH....

[BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT KEY POINTS OF YOUR PRE-DISD LIFE AND CAREER:

- YOUR PERSPECTIVE AS A CHILD AND STUDENT;
- YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER AND YOUNG ADMINISTRATOR;
- YOUR TOPEKA EXPERIENCE;
- DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE "NORTHERN" EXPERIENCE AND THE "SOUTHERN" EXPERIENCE, ETC.] .....

BACK IN DALLAS, SOME KEY DECISIONS HAD BEEN MADE CONCERNING DESEGREGATION THAT DETERMINED THE DIRECTION THE DALLAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS WERE TO TAKE -- AND STILL TAKE TODAY.

FIRST, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE "SPIRIT" OF DESEGREGATION NO LONGER COULD BE SERVED SIMPLY BY "MIXING" STUDENTS.

THE TRUE "SPIRIT" OF DESEGREGATION -- THE COURTS AND SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY AGREED -- WAS TO ASSURE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND CULTURAL EXCELLENCE FOR MINORITY AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.

SECOND, IT WAS AGREED THAT THERE COULD BE NO SINGLE SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGE OF ENSURING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR ALL STUDENTS.

NOR WOULD THE SOLUTIONS TO A PROBLEM THAT HAD BEEN SO LONG IN THE MAKING BE EITHER EASY OR FAST.

THEY WOULD REQUIRE:

...A MULTI-FACETED "ATTACK,"

...A BROADBASED EFFORT, AND

...A BUILDING PROCESS, IN WHICH SMALL GAINS WOULD LEAD TO BIGGER GAINS.

THIRD, THE TARGET WAS IDENTIFIED SPECIFICALLY AS REDUCING AND ELIMINATING THE "GAP" IN LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT BETWEEN MINORITY YOUNGSTERS AND WHITE, ADVANTAGED YOUNGSTERS.

THE PRIORITY FOCUS WAS PLACED NOT ON BUSING AND MIXING -- BUT ON WHAT THE STUDENTS WOULD HAVE AT THE END OF THE BUS RIDE!

THE RESULT OF THESE EARLY DECISIONS AND THE ONGOING MISSION TOWARD EQUITY IN DALLAS PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IS A PROGRAM AIMED AT AND DEDICATED TO MAKING UP FOR THE DISADVANTAGES SO MANY MINORITY YOUNGSTERS BRING WITH THEM TO

SCHOOL AND FOR THE INFERIOR EDUCATION THEY MAY HAVE RECEIVED IN THE PAST.

I THINK OF THIS OVERALL PROGRAM AS HAVING TEN BASIC COMPONENTS:

FIRST, THE OVERALL PROGRAM IS CONCERNED WITH USING ADDITIONAL AND ENRICHED RESOURCES TO HELP MINORITY CHILDREN "CATCH UP" WITH THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.

LATER, I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE WAYS WE DO THIS, WHICH IS THROUGH WHAT WE CALL SPECIAL "LEARNING CENTERS." THESE ARE NEIGHBORHOOD, 4-THROUGH-6 SCHOOLS THAT ARE ENRICHED WITH SPECIAL RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS.

ALSO, WE'VE SUCCESSFULLY PILOTED A NEW TALENTED AND GIFTED PROGRAM THAT MOVES BEYOND ACADEMIC TESTING AS THE SOLE CRITERIA FOR PLACEMENT AND INTO MORE SUBJECTIVE AND BROADBASED RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS. CALLED THE

"LAUREATE PROGRAM," IT REACHES 15 PERCENT OF OUR YOUNGSTERS -- INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE "TALENTED" IN ONE OR MORE CREATIVE FIELDS AND THOSE WHO ARE GIFTED BUT DO NOT NECESSARILY SCORE WELL YET ON THE STANDARDIZED TESTS.

SECOND, OUR OVERALL EFFORT UTILIZES THE DESCRIPTORS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE BODY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH IN ORDER TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO LEARN.

WE ALSO STRESS A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM, MATERIALS AND TEXTBOOKS. AND WE LOOK FOR INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS WITH PROMISE, PILOT THEM IN LIMITED SITUATIONS, EVALUATE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WITH OUR STUDENTS, AND THEN MORE WIDELY IMPLEMENT THOSE THAT ARE EFFECTIVE.

THESE EFFORTS REACH INTO EVERY SCHOOL AND EVERY CLASSROOM IN THE DISTRICT. WE STRIVE TO RAISE EXPECTATIONS AND TO IMPROVE OUR STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS LEARNERS.

RECENTLY, I PROPOSED THAT WE STRENGHTEN SOME OF OUR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO BE CERTAIN THAT ALL STUDENTS WILL LEARN WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED IN A NEW DECADE AND A NEW CENTURY. THESE INCLUDE A REQUIREMENT THAT EVERY GRADUATE BE TRI-LINGUAL AND HAVE FULFILLED CITIZENSHIP AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS, AND THAT EVERY STUDENT COMPLETE A COURSE IN ETHICS AND VALUES.

THIRD, OUR EQUITY PROGRAM OFFERS A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICES FOR OUR PARENTS AND OUR STUDENTS.

...FROM PRE-SCHOOLS AND ELEMENTARY VANGUARDS TO MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIES AND HIGH SCHOOL MAGNETS.

...FROM THE NEW LAUREATE PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM TRANSFERS TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PILOT YEAR-ROUND AND STAFF-MANAGED SCHOOLS.

...FROM ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND COLLEGE-BOUND STUDIES TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND A CHOICE OF DEGREE PLANS.

RECENTLY, I ALSO PROPOSED THAT WE INITIATE SEVERAL NEW PILOT SCHOOLS -- INCLUDING A TECHNOLOGICAL SCHOOL, A YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL, A JUNIOR HIGH CONFIGURATION, AND A LOCALLY MANAGED SCHOOL.

I'M GOING TO RETURN TO THIS COMPONENT OF "CONTROLLED CHOICE" A LITTLE LATER.

FOURTH, ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING GOALS, DROPOUT REDUCTION GOALS, AND MINORITY HIRING GOALS ARE CLEARLY STATED AND SUPPORTED -- FROM THE TOP DOWN.

CLEAR GOALS GIVE EVERYONE A VISION FOR WHICH TO STRIVE. STAFFS OF LOCAL SCHOOLS BECOME INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING THEIR OWN GOALS, BUT THE PROCESS BEGINS AT THE TOP WITH CLEARLY AGREED UPON AND STATED GOALS FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

FIFTH, EACH LOCAL SCHOOL AND THE DISTRICT AS A WHOLE HAVE WRITTEN PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND FOR REACHING THEIR GOALS.

THESE INCLUDE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION, THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS MODEL, AND A "NETWORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS," WHICH IDENTIFIES AND TREATS THE ROOT OF AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT'S PROBLEMS -- SUCH AS DRUG ABUSE OR FAMILY PROBLEMS.

THIS EFFORT BRINGS TOGETHER TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, LISTENERS, MENTORS, TUTORS AND SOCIAL SERVICES PERSONNEL AND AGENCIES TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES. ON A DISTRICTWIDE BASIS, WE HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL -- COMPLETE WITH A STAFFED NURSERY -- FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS AND MOTHERS-TO-BE.

SIXTH, MONITORING IS BUILT INTO THE PROCESS AS A MEANS OF IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T, WHERE IMPROVEMENT IS NEEDED, AND WHEN CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE.

MONITORING OCCURS AT AND BY ALL LEVELS -- FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS AND CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION TO THE SCHOOL BOARD AND THE COURTS.

SEVENTH, ACCOUNTABILITY ALSO IS OFFERED BOTH ON THE LOCAL SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVELS AND TO BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND THE COURTS.

EIGHTH, STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IS ANOTHER KEY COMPONENT OF THE DALLAS PROGRAM.

FOR THE MOST PART, TEACHERS HAVE NOT BEEN TRAINED TO TEACH MULTICULTURAL LESSONS IN PLURALISTIC CLASSROOMS, TO USE RESEARCH-BASED TECHNIQUES, AND TO CONVEY HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR, AND REINFORCE THE SELF-ESTEEM OF, EACH CHILD.

IN DALLAS, WE'RE WORKING TO REMEDY THIS WITH OUR NEW "MINI-UNIVERSITY" OR STAFF DEVELOPMENT CENTER. HERE,

TEACHERS WILL BECOME WELL VERSED IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING, INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING, AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND THEY WILL BE GIVEN TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN RESEARCH-BASED TECHNIQUES AND THE ART OF TEACHING.

NINTH, PARENT EDUCATION, COOPERATION, AND PARTICIPATION ARE GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION AND PLANNING.

MANY OF OUR PARENTS WANT INFORMATION ON HOW TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN, AND MANY NEED HELP IN WORKING APPROPRIATELY WITH THEIR CHILDREN. WE HAVE FOUND THAT IT IS WISE IN MANY SCHOOLS TO ALSO BRING IN THE GRANDPARENTS.

JUST FRIDAY, IN FACT, I WALKED DOWN A HALL AND SAW A SIGN ON A DOOR THAT READ "GRANDPARENTS MEETING."

AT TIMES, THIS MEANS HELPING PARENTS BECOME BETTER EDUCATED THEMSELVES, SUCH AS PROVIDING ESL CLASSES, COMPUTER CLASSES OR GED CLASSES, WHICH OFTEN STRENGHTENS THE

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND PLACES A HIGHER FAMILY VALUE ON EDUCATION.

AND IT ALSO MEANS PUTTING THE SCHEDULES OF SINGLE AND WORKING PARENTS BEFORE OUR OWN CONVENIENCE AS EDUCATORS.

AND TENTH, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS ENCOURAGED, INVITED AND REWARDED.

LAST YEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, OVER 18,000 VOLUNTEERS AND OVER 2,000 ADOPTERS HELPED TO ENRICH LEARNING AND THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FOR DALLAS STUDENTS.

A DISTRICTWIDE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS, A COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, AND LOCAL SCHOOL CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS VALUABLE COMPONENT OF OUR OVERALL PROGRAM.

IN EVALUATING THESE EFFORTS TO DATE, I CAN SAY WITHOUT HESITATION THAT PROGRESS DEFINITELY HAS BEEN MADE.

OUR STUDENTS HAVE MADE TREMENDOUS GAINS.

- ONLY AUSTIN AND CORPUS CRISTI HAD A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING THE TEAMS LAST YEAR.
- DALLAS' INCREASE OVER THE PAST TWO-YEAR PERIOD SURPASSED ALL OF THE OTHER URBAN DISTRICTS IN TEXAS.
- AND THE PERCENTAGE OF OUR STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE 40TH PERCENTILE ON ITBS/TAP SHOWS A CONTINUING UPWARD TREND.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS IN NARROWING THE "LEARNING GAP" BETWEEN WHITE STUDENTS AND ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS.

- IN 1980, 28 PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND 35 PERCENT OF HISPANIC STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE 40TH PERCENTILE ON THE ITBS/TAP IN MATHEMATICS -- COMPARED TO 63 PERCENT OF WHITES.
- IN 1989, 70 PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND 74 PERCENT OF HISPANIC STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE 40TH PERCENTILE -- COMPARED TO 86 PERCENT OF WHITES.
- IN OTHER WORDS, IN 1980 THE GAP BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITES WAS 35 PERCENTAGE POINTS, BUT IN 1989, THE GAP WAS ONLY 16 PERCENTAGE POINTS. SIMILAR REDUCTIONS WERE MADE IN THE GAPS IN LANGUAGE AND READING.

OBVIOUSLY, HOWEVER, THOUGH THE GAP HAS BEEN NARROWED, IT HAS NOT BEEN CLOSED. UNTIL IT IS, WE WILL REMAIN TOTALLY

COMMITTED TO OUR MISSION AND OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND WAYS OF ACHIEVING IT.

AS ALWAYS, NEW CHALLENGES HAVE ARISEN FROM YEAR TO YEAR, BUT PERHAPS THE MOST CONSISTENT OF OUR CHALLENGES HAVE BEEN:

- ONE, RECRUITING MINORITY STAFF, AND,
- TWO, GETTING WHITE STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOLS IN PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY AREAS OF THE CITY.

WE HAVE EXPERIMENTED IN OUR MINORITY RECRUITMENT EFFORTS, AND NOW HAVE ON STAFF A DIRECTOR OF MINORITY RECRUITMENT AND PLANNING AND RECRUITMENT SPECIALISTS WHO ARE IMPLEMENTING MORE TARGETED AND INTENSIVE EFFORTS.

WE ALSO HAVE NOW BEGUN PAYING STIPENDS FOR BILINGUAL TEACHERS.

AS FOR GETTING ANGLO STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOLS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY, OUR BEST EFFORTS TO DATE HAVE INVOLVED:

- PLACING MAGNET-TYPE SCHOOLS IN "NEUTRAL" GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS.
- PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO STUDENTS WHO TRANSFER UNDER THE M TO M PROGRAM, AND
- LOCATING MAGNET SCHOOLS THAT PARTICULARLY APPEAL TO WHITE STUDENTS -- SUCH AS TALENTED AND GIFTED, BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, AND PERFORMING ARTS -- IN MINORITY NEIGHBORHOODS.

WE EVEN HAVE STUDENTS FROM SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILLING TO PAY TUITION TO ATTEND THESE MAGNET SCHOOLS.

NOW, WITH THAT OVERVIEW, I'D LIKE TO SPEND THE REMAINING TIME,...

... FIRST, TALKING ABOUT THE POLICY TOWARD CHOICE THAT WE HAVE FORMULATED IN OUR DISTRICT, AND,

... LASTLY, INTRODUCING YOU TO ONE OF OUR K-THROUGH-6 SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD LEARNING CENTERS.

RECENTLY, OUR BOARD OF EDUCATION TOOK A STRONG POLICY POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF CHOICE. I THINK OF OUR POLICY AS ONE IN FAVOR OF "CONTROLLED" CHOICE.

FOR TWO DECADES ALREADY, THE DISD HAS BEEN ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT....

... ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS REFLECT JUDICIAL DIRECTIVES TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN.

... SPECIAL PROGRAMS PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HARMONIZE STUDENT NEEDS WITH THE WIDEST VARIETY OF CLASSROOM CHOICES.

... ALL CHOICES ARE ACADEMICALLY CENTERED AND BASED ON STUDENT NEEDS. I'VE ALREADY REFERRED TO MANY OF THESE.

WE ALSO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF CHOICES WITHIN THE DISTRICT, SUCH AS:

... HIGHLY STRUCTURED AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO CREATE A SECOND TIER OF EDUCATION,

... ADDITIONAL MONTESSORI PROGRAMS,

... EXPANDED FINE ARTS PROGRAMS,

... MORE PROGRAMS FOR AT RISK STUDENTS,

... MORE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENT EDUCATION,

... EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR OPPORTUNITIES, AND

... EXPANDED TALENTED AND GIFTED AND OTHER EXISTING PROGRAMS.

NOW, WHEN I SPEAK OF "CONTROLLED CHOICE," I SPEAK OF THE NEED TO PUT CONTROLS ON HOW THE CHOICES ARE DEFINED AND ON HOW THEY ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

WE DO NOT SUPPORT INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFER OF STUDENTS.

WE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY SCHEME TO FUND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION, SUCH AS VOUCHERS OR TUITION TAX CREDITS.

WE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY PLAN THAT WOULD FURTHER RACIAL, ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL SEGREGATION OF STUDENTS.

WE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY PLAN THAT WOULD TAKE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AWAY FROM LOCAL BOARDS.

AND WE DO NOT SUPPORT ANY PROGRAM THAT LEADS TO CHILDREN BEING REJECTED OR TO PRIDE IN ONE'S COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD BEING DESTROYED, WHICH WOULD LIKELY CAUSE SEVERE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

WE BELIEVE THAT CHOICES MUST BE DEMONSTRABLY ACADEMICALLY CENTERED, AND THAT THE OPTIONS PROVIDED WITHIN, AND BY, A LOCAL DISTRICT BE BASED ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH, THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC SKILLS AND LEARNING BASICS FOR ALL STUDENTS AND THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS WITHIN A PARTICULAR DISTRICT.

RESEARCH TELLS US THAT FOUR FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

. THE STUDENT'S APTITUDE -- WHICH CAN BE BUILT AND IMPROVED AND REINFORCED THROUGH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, PRESCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN, INDIVIDUALIZED AND PLURALISTIC INSTRUCTION, THE IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND INTERESTS AND TALENTS, AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS.

. THE STUDENT'S SCHOOL -- WHICH SHOULD PROVIDE A CLIMATE OF COMMUNITY AND OPERATE WITH PROFESSIONALISM AND WHICH MUST HAVE STRONG LEADERSHIP AND A CLEAR AND EVIDENT MISSION AND GOALS.

. THE STUDENT'S FAMILY -- TO WHOM THE SCHOOL MUST REACH WITH INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND EDUCATION AND WHO MUST BECOME INTERESTED AND INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION, SELF ESTEEM AND PERCEPTION, AND SCHOOL.

. AND, LASTLY, THE STUDENT'S PEERS.

WE BELIEVE ALL OF THESE FACTORS CAN BE BEST REFINED AND APPLIED <u>WITHIN</u> A GIVEN SCHOOL DISTRICT. AND THAT A SCHOOL DISTRICT CAN BEST APPLY AND REFINE THESE ELEMENTS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE STUDENTS TO BE SERVED.

PERHAPS THE BEST EXAMPLES OF THIS PRINCIPLE AND PHILOSOPHY THAT I CAN PRESENT TONIGHT ARE THE SPECIAL 4-6 LEARNING CENTERS IN SOUTH AND WEST DALLAS.

LET ME INTRODUCE TO YOU ONE OF THESE CENTERS: PEARL C. ANDERSON LEARNING CENTER.

IN 1962, PEARL C. ANDERSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL WAS OPENED AS THE FIRST JUNIOR HIGH BUILD FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SOUTH DALLAS. A DECADE LATER, IT BECAME AN INTERMEDIATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THEN, IN 1976, IT BECAME A CAREER EXPLORATION ACADEMY THAT STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT COULD CHOOSE TO ATTEND.

FOR YEARS, THE STUDENTS IN GRADES 4 THROUGH 6 WHO LIVED IN THE PEARL C. ANDERSON NEIGHBORHOOD WERE BUSED TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH DALLAS. BUT IN 1984, A DESEGREGATION COURT ORDER GAVE THESE STUDENTS THE <u>OPTION</u> TO RETURN TO PEARL C. ANDERSON.

NOW, HOWEVER, "PEARL C. ANDERSON" WOULD BECOME A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL.

...IT WOULD HAVE SPECIAL FINANCING AND SPECIAL RESOURCES.

...IT WOULD HAVE SPECIAL PROGRAMS OF INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION -- INCLUDING "A PRIORI," ESL, TAG, FINE ARTS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND COMPUTERS.

...IT WOULD HAVE A LONGER SCHOOL DAY AND AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS, SMALLER CLASSES AND MULTIETHNIC INSTRUCTION IN ALL CURRICULUM AREAS.

...IT WOULD HAVE EXPERIENCED TEACHERS AND A PROVEN LEADER AS THE SCHOOL'S PRINCIPAL.

...BECAUSE MANY OF THE CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY LACKED SIGNIFICANT MALE MODELS, IT ALSO WOULD HAVE MORE MALES ON THE FACULTY THAT DID OTHER SCHOOLS.

...THE STAFF WOULD INCLUDE COUNSELORS, TWO ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS, A COMMUNITY LIAISON, AND A FULLTIME NURSE.

...MOREOVER, ALL OF THE HANDPICKED FACULTY AND STAFF

HAD APPLIED TO WORK AT THE CENTER, AND THEY WERE REWARDED WITH SPECIAL STIPENDS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, HOWEVER, THERE WAS MUCH MISTRUST AND HOPELESSNESS IN 1984. THE STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY PERCEIVED THE CENTER IN A NEGATIVE SENSE AND DEMONSTRATED AN ADVERSARIAL POSTURE.

MOREOVER, THE NORTH DALLAS SCHOOLS TO WHICH THE STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN BUSED DID NOT WANT TO LOSE THESE STUDENTS! AND A COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE WAS CREATED, WITH EACH SCHOOL UNDERTAKING RECRUITING EFFORTS TO ENROLL THE CHILDREN.

IN ORDER TO PLAN AND PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH THE BEST AT EACH SCHOOL, HOWEVER, AN ENROLLMENT DEADLINE WAS ESTABLISHED.

THOUGH SOME CHILDREN ELECTED TO CONTINUE TRAVELING BY BUS TO NORTH DALLAS, SOME 1,400 SOUTH DALLAS STUDENTS WERE GREETED BY 129 FACULTY MEMBERS ON OPENING DAY.

EIGHTY PERCENT OF THOSE STUDENTS WERE FUNCTIONING BELOW THE 50TH PERCENTILE IN READING.

ABOUT 20 PERCENT WERE ASSIGNED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION.

MORE THAN 10 PERCENT WERE OVER AGE.

AND THE STUDENT BODY'S DEPRIVATION INDEX WAS CALCULATED AT 81.76.

FROM THE DAY THE SCHOOL OPENED AND THIS NEW PROGRAM GOT UNDER WAY, THE SCHOOL'S GOALS WERE CLEAR:

. ONE, TO PROVIDE A SCHOOL CLIMATE THAT HAS BUSINESSLIKE LEADERSHIP, AN EMPHASIS ON GETTING WORK ACCOMPLISHED, AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE; THAT IS SUPPORTIVE AND NURTURING TO THE LEARNER; AND IN

WHICH FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS AND OTHERS SHARE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

. TWO, TO HELP EACH STUDENT DEVELOP A POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF HIMSELF OR HERSELF AS A "LEARNER."

. THREE, TO ENHANCE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS IN READING, MATH, AND LANGUAGE ARTS AS MEASURED BY STANDARDIZED, NORM-REFERENCED TESTS.

. AND FOUR, TO ENHANCE STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN OTHER AREAS AND AS ASSESSED THROUGH OTHER MEANS. THESE AREAS INCLUDE ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING, SOCIAL SKILLS, CULTURAL AWARENESS AND LITERACY, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, AND PROFICIENCY IN NON-ACADEMIC SUBJECT AREAS.

IN ADDITION, SPECIAL EMPHASIS WAS PLACED -- FROM DAY ONE -- ON CONSISTENCY OF INSTRUCTION AND ON PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING WORK.

VERY IMPORTANTLY, THE CHILDREN ALSO WERE TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS ON A DAILY BASIS.

...AND PARENTS WERE TO BE PART OF THE SCHOOL -- AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS. CLASSES FOR THEM WERE HELD AT THE SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY LIAISONS CARRIED THE SCHOOL'S GOALS TO THE COMMUNITY -- AND BROUGHT THE COMMUNITY INTO THE SCHOOL FOR ACTIVITIES, AS VOLUNTEERS AND AS PARTICIPANTS IN LEARNING.

REALIZING THAT ALL STUDENTS LEARN WHEN TAUGHT BY A COMPETENT STAFF AND FEELING THAT THE CENTER WOULD DO WHAT IT SHOULD AND MUST DO, THE COMMUNITY RAPIDLY GAVE ITS SUPPORT TO PEARL C....

. THE PTA AND COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE GREW TO A COMBINED MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 300.

. COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE SUCCESS OF THE CENTER.

. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAME TO THE SCHOOL ON A DAILY BASIS.

. STAFF MEMBERS MADE HOME VISITS AND TOOK POSITIONS ON COMMUNITY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.

. AND THE SCHOOL WAS OPENED TO COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS.

AND TODAY,...

. 44 PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS ARE FUNCTIONING ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE... MORE THAN DOUBLE THE OPENING DAY PERCENTAGE.

. THE SIXTH GRADERS' AVERAGE ITBS MATH SCORES PUT THEM AT THE 7.3 GRADE LEVEL. AS ENTERING

THIRD-GRADERS IN 1986, THEY WERE .7 OF A GRADE BELOW WHITE STUDENTS. THE GAP TODAY HAS BEEN NARROWED TO .3.

- AND ON ITBS LANGUAGE ARTS, THE SIXTH GRADERS ARE AT THE 7.5 GRADE LEVEL -- NARROWING THE GAP WITH WHITE STUDENTS FROM .9 TO .6.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TODAY IS TO REPEAT THIS PROGRESS IN THE AREA OF READING, WHERE, UNFORTUNATELY, SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT HAS YET TO BE ACHIEVED. A STRONG EMPHASIS CURRENTLY IS BEING PLACED ON READING FOR ENJOYMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING AND COMPREHENSION SKILLS.

THE STUDENTS, THE COMMUNITY, THE PARENTS, THE SCHOOL AND THE CONCEPT ALREADY HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES. IN FACT, THE NUMBER OF LEARNING CENTERS HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO SIX, AND THE COURTS

HAVE APPROVED THE EXPANSION OF THE CONCEPT TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL.

IN RECENT MONTHS, THE UNITED STATES HAS CHEERED AS PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE HAVE BEEN FINDING NEW FREEDOM AND NEW HOPE.

IT IS PUBLIC EDUCATION'S MISSION, MOST OF US WOULD AGREE, TO HELP OUR MINORITY YOUNGSTERS HERE AT HOME TO GAIN NEW FREEDOM AND NEW HOPE... TO HAVE OPTIONS AND CHOICES FOR THEIR LIVES, TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS AND EARN A GOOD LIVING, AND TO BE FULL PARTICIPANTS IN THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. THERE ARE VARIOUS OPINIONS, VARIOUS STRATEGIES AND VARIOUS THEORIES ON HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE THAT MISSION....

...BUT AS NEVER BEFORE, THERE <u>IS</u> AGREEMENT THAT WE <u>MUST</u> ACHIEVE THIS MISSION.

THAT WE MUST "TEACH THE CHILDREN WELL."

"TEACH THE CHILDREN WELL" IS THE MOTTO ADOPTED BY THE SOUTH AND WEST DALLAS LEARNING CENTERS.

THE WORDS ARE LAYED OUT IN AN ARCH ACROSS THE TOP OF A CIRCLE THAT REPRESENTS THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT AND THE CLIMATE OF COMMUNITY THAT HAVE ENABLED THESE SCHOOLS TO SUCCEED.

ALONG THE BOTTOM ARE TWO OTHER PHRASES, MORE RECENTLY ADDED TO THE SYMBOL OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY.

THEY ARE: "I CAN" AND "I WILL."

AS WE ALL SEEK TO IMPLEMENT THE SPIRIT OF DESEGREGATION AND TO ENABLE ALL MINORITY CHILDREN TO LEARN, TO ACHIEVE AND TO SUCCEED, IT MIGHT HELP TO KEEP THOSE WORDS IN MIND....

WE <u>CAN</u>.

WE <u>WILL</u>.